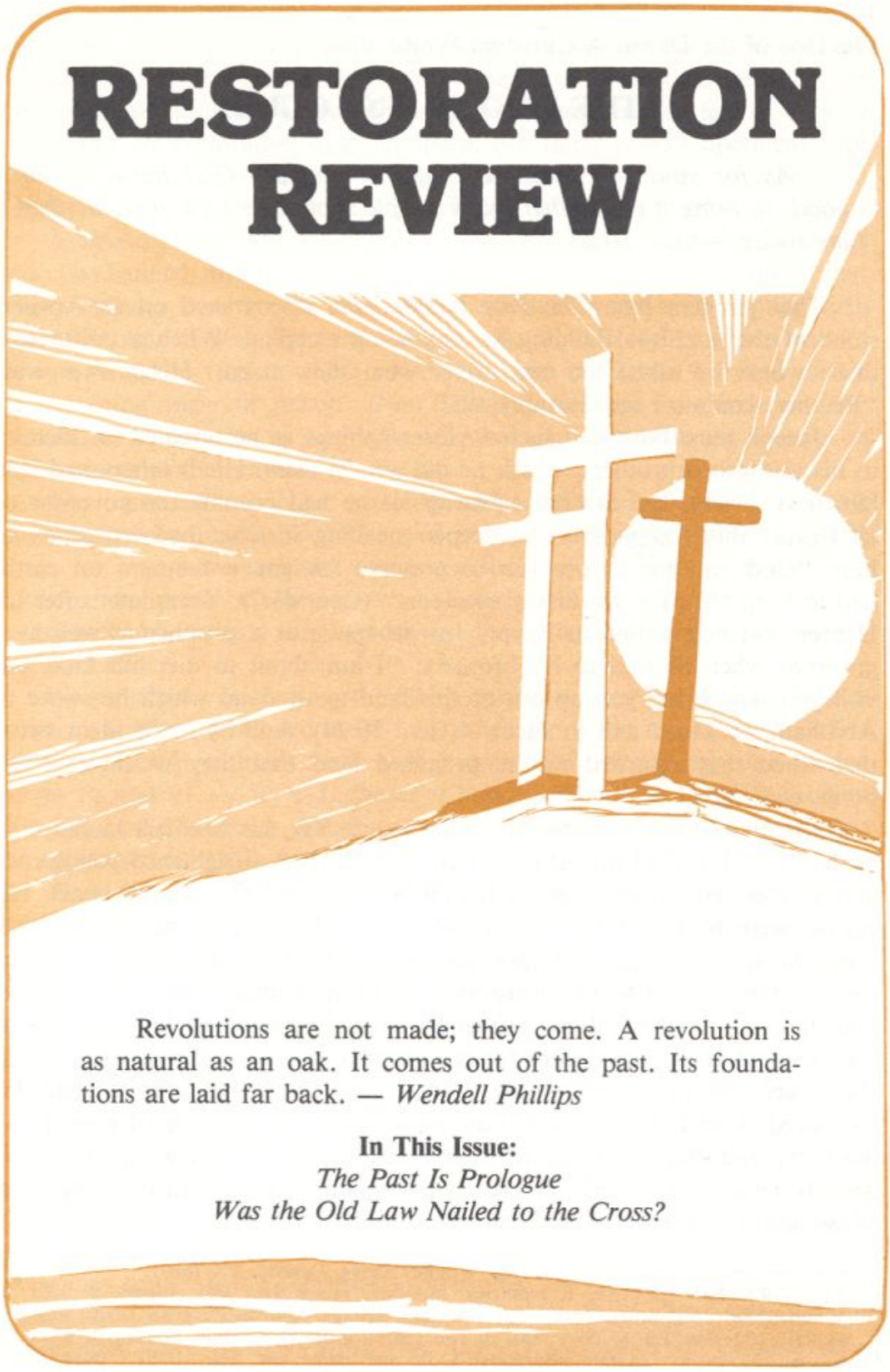
RESTORATION REVIEW



Revolutions are not made; they come. A revolution is as natural as an oak. It comes out of the past. Its foundations are laid far back. — *Wendell Phillips*

In This Issue:

The Past Is Prologue

Was the Old Law Nailed to the Cross?

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The Doe of the Dawn: A Christian World View …

THE PAST IS PROLOGUE

As for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today. —Gen. 50:20

That pungent line, *The Past* is *Prologue*, is engraved on the cornerstone of the Archives Building in our nation's capital. When a visitor saw those words he asked the taxi driver what they meant. His answer was, "Brother, you ain't seen nothin' yet!"

Joseph must have had such a view of things as he revealed his identity to his astonished brothers, which he did amidst tears. His brothers had sold him into slavery, but in God's providence he had become the governor of all Egypt. But Joseph saw the deeper meaning in what had happened to him: "God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors" (Gen. 45:7). Years later after his Hebrew kin had settled in Egypt, Joseph spoke as a prophet as well as a governor when he said to his brothers: "I am about to die; but God will visit you, and bring you up out of this land to the land which he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob" (Gen. 50:24). And he made them swear that when they returned to the promised land that they would take his bones with them!

Joseph realized that the past is prologue. Yes, his brothers intended to do him evil, but God turned it into good. God used a frightened young man and a cruel deed to bring about his purposes for the children of Israel. His people were to be cradled and preserved by the greatest nation on earth until the time for them to take possession of the land promised to their fathers. God was at work in history, "to bring it about" as Joseph put it, and Joseph saw that all the things that had happened to him, as bad as they seemed at the time, were for the ultimate good of all mankind. It was this larger view of things that lifted Joseph above pettiness and revenge. He embraced, kissed, and blessed those who would have murdered him. If we are petty and vindictive toward each other it may be that we do not have Joseph's grasp of history. He could have said to his brothers as did that Washington taxi driver, "You ain't seen nothin' yet!"

Back in the sixteenth century when Copernicus made the discovery that the earth is not the center of the universe, a doctrine held dear by the church and world alike, he could hardly have imagined our age of nuclear science with its exploration of outer space. For thirty years Copernicus kept his views to himself, but finally in 1543 when death was near, he persuaded a frightened printer to publish his *Revolutions of Heavenly Bodies.*

Galileo took up where Copernicus left off, and in 1616 his teachings were condemned by the inquisition in Rome. The church ruled that Galileo's theory that the sun is the center of the universe and that the earth revolves around it was "foolish, absurd, false in theology, and heretical." He was forced to recant, which saved him from execution, but had to live his remaining years in prison. Even Luther joined in the condemnation, referring to Copernicus as an "upstart astrologer" for believing the sun to be the center of the universe.

Alas, how far we have come in our understanding of the universe since Copernicus and Galileo! The past is indeed prologue, and it continues to be, for even now we stand at the threshold of even greater discoveries. How foolish man is to suppose that he has arrived. In whatever area of life we are still only writing the introduction to the book of human knowledge and experience.

We have been celebrating the 500th anniversary of the birth of Martin Luther, which has reminded us of how much the world has changed in five centuries. It was unlikely that a Roman pontiff would ever be paying tribute to Luther — in a Lutheran Church at that! — or that Roman Catholics and Lutherans would ever come closer together on the doctrine of justification by faith alone.

These are but glimpses of changes that run deep in the life of the church today. Carl Ketcherside will soon begin a series in this journal on his experiences at the world evangelism conference last year in Amsterdam, where thousands of itinerant evangelists gathered from all parts of the world to share their experiences in reaching the world for Christ. Carl's account will thrill you, and you will agree with him that such an event could not have happened even a few years ago.

You seldom hear that old dirge anymore that the church is about to die. Sectarianism may be in trouble but not the church. Only a few years back the calamity howlers were saying that the Christian faith is on the wane and that its only future is to shrink, wither, and die, and they even spoke of ours as "the post-Christian era." We now see, however, that our age comes nearer being the pre-Christian era, for Christian mission in the world has only begun. When I was in Thailand last October the missionaries there received word

that literally thousands of Chinese refugees on the skirts of Red China are turning to Christ, and it is expected that in time they will bear the message to the heart of their homeland.

And in Black Africa an average of 16,000 a day join the Christian church, causing some knowledgeable missiologists to believe that in another two decades Africa will be the most Christian nation in the world. And the growth of the gospel in Korea is nothing short of phenomenal, with that nation having the largest churches in the world. And missionaries report that even in Russia there is a tremendous revival of faith, especially among the young people. There is a definite groundswell of interest in Jesus Christ among the youth both in the universities in the Soviet Union and in the satellite countries of Eastern Europe.

To say that the past is prologue is to have a positive, optimistic view of the future, even if it be a realistic one. John Dewey thought the word meliorism to be better than optimism, for the meliorist acknowledges the severity of evil in the world but still believes that conditions can and will be improved, while the optimist tends to minimize the dimension of evil. Use what word we will, in seeing the past as prologue the Christian is saying that there is a glorious tomorrow in the plan of God and that his church upon earth is an important part in its realization.

If it is true that the past is prologue and that “you ain’t seen nothin’ yet,” it would follow that the world is getting better, allowing for some ups and downs. In spite of the devastating evils that continue to assail us a good case can be made for an ever-improving world. H. G. Wells’ gloomy prediction that while man began in a cave he will end up in the ruins of a slum has hardly proved to be the case. The truth is that there are not only fewer slums today than ever before in the world but that man’s lot is generally better than ever before.

This may not be clearly the case when we compare today with yesterday or this year with last year, but it becomes evident when we compare this century with the last century. Take prison reform in England as an example. A century ago hundreds of prisoners, half-naked, were crowded into cold, small wards. Even women and children had to cook, eat, and sleep on the floor. Those conditions no longer exist. In both England and America the mentally ill were treated as criminals, children worked in mines and sweat shops, and women commonly died in child birth. And in both countries men, women, and children were sold as slaves on the auction block like cattle. These things are now unthinkable. In fact many people in the world today have several “servants” around the house in the form of gadgets and appliances. I recall how hard life was for my own mother, who spent one

day a week over a wash tub doing the laundry and another day doing the ironing. One of my older brothers, who had to help mother with the washing back in those days, is still teased about the way he would ask, “Mom, are they all wet yet?”

That is one way of recalling the hardships of yesteryear, *Are they all wet yet?*, for even when they were all wet there was a long way to go. Whether it was diseases that plagued us, poverty, difficulty of travel, limited communication, or scarcity of reading matter, it is now a different world. I have traveled the world somewhat, and everywhere I go Taiwan, Korea, Japan, Thailand, Europe, South America, Canada, Mexico — the people are better off than they were in decades past.

And as stubbornly slow as it might seem, there is moral progress as well. Yes, Russia callously shot down a jet full of innocent people, but look at the outcry there was against it around the world. Yes, we have 25,000 murders a year by drunks on our highways, but there is emerging such an outrage against such irresponsible carnage, including an army of mad mothers, that this evil may soon be virtually eliminated.

All this means that the kingdom of God is gradually breaking in upon our world. Like the tiny mustard seed that imperceptibly grows into a giant tree, the kingdom of God is gradually becoming a reality, scientifically and technologically as well as spiritually. That there is a spiritual awakening around the world is especially evident. The world hungers for God perhaps more today than at anytime in history. There is a renewal movement in virtually every denomination. The underdeveloped countries are not only making substantial gains in technology but they are also looking to spiritual values. And those highly sophisticated nations that now seem so indifferent to spiritual things, such as Japan, may soon experience a religious awakening that will eclipse their scientific advancements.

This does not mean that human nature is changing and that sin will soon be a thing of the past, but it does mean that the God who sits upon the throne, declaring that he will make all things new, is at work in our world and that his promise of “new heavens and a new earth” is written in the script and will one day be a reality. And like that mustard seed its coming may be imperceptible in terms of weeks or even years but more evident in terms of decades and generations.

Observe how our own Churches of Christ-Christian Churches have changed in the past generation. While we may lag behind others in this respect, we are nonetheless far less sectarian and far more open than just a few years ago. Like Marxism that has gradually

been losing its hold over men's minds in recent years (another sign of a coming spiritual renaissance?), our people are no longer buying the old bromides of the Church of Christisms of a bygone era.

The past is prologue. You haven't seen anything yet. As for Churches of Christ, the renewal that is coming, one that will boggle the mind of our most hardened skeptics, may not be just around the corner but it is certainly down the road. And we can help make it so by following Jesus Christ, who also believed that the past is prologue, when he said, "My Father is working until now and I am working." —*the Editor*

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ON BEING LOCKED UP TOGETHER

My experiences in being "locked up" in terms of incarceration are rather limited, one night in fact, which is hardly enough to write home about. Since my one lowly night in jail was in the most Church of Christ town in the world (for its size), Henderson, Tennessee, and at the invitation of Freed-Hardeman College, the most obsessive Church of Christ institution, and the circumstances unique, I did more than write home about it. I wrote an entire issue of this journal about it, an issue long unattainable by the most avid collector. But that was long ago, and that is not what I am talking about by being "locked up" this time around, except in one respect.

There is a kind of bond between those who share the ignominy of being stashed away in the slammer, such as I enjoyed with one of the town drunks. He was in for several days, working out a fine for public drunkenness by working on the county roads. He was then both sober and magnanimous, assuring me that it was the first time ever for him to be in jail with a preacher. In spite of his sobriety I had difficulty explaining to him why the town's Christian college would put one of their own graduates in jail. He seemed content to accept it as one more of life's mysteries, but I think he might have taken a drink if it had been available. He probably felt for me more deeply than anybody in town when they took me out to eat under armed guard.

Our common bond was enhanced by our sharing a potential danger. He told me of old "Bad Eye" that the police were looking for, and if they find him, he warned me, they'll throw him in here with us and he'll whip both of us. As I lay down to sleep that night in my clothes, topcoat and all, I found myself pulling for "Bad Eye"!

My new friend and I had a very special relationship, even if but for a day, for there is something special in being locked up together. And that is what this piece is about.

But one further illustration. Being locked up together has its unique bonding power even when it is not completely authentic. I once arranged with the police chief of Denton to "entertain" the boys in my special philosophy class of our local high school. They rode in the police cars, one or two with each unit, during the late night patrol. One of them got into a 90-mile an hour chase with a malefactor, and I listened in on his excitement from the protective confines of the police station. Others witnessed arrests and stood by while the police checked on robbery suspects. Only then could they understand that their unique experience was made possible not only by an innovative police chief but by the affidavits of their parents, releasing the city of any liability.

Then came the unexpected. Once the excitement was all over and they were back in the station, the police put all twelve of them in jail! Turning away from their startled faces; the officer told them that he wanted them to see what it is to be in jail, so that "We'll not have to lock you up for real sometime." And he left them there for awhile, allowing the boys to bunk in and talk it over, two or three to a cell. Even that created a bond between those boys. It was talked about the rest of the school year "Marvin and I were locked up together!" It really does something for you — the kind of thing the kids will recall when they gather for their 25th class reunion.

But it is not the same when you are locked up alone. That same night I rode with a unit that patrolled the campus of NTSU and we got a call that a "peeping Tom" was looking in on a girl's dorm. The lad was arrested and I watched as they locked him up, *alone*. I have seldom seen such a shocked, startled, and surprised face. He obviously did not suppose his alley-side visit to the girl's dorm would end up in the city cooler. It is no way to go to jail. Go with someone else and with dignity or don't go.

I thought of some of these things when I read this exciting line from the renowned Baptist scholar, A. T. Robertson: "This is our security, Christ is locked in the bosom of the Father. We are locked together with Christ in God."

He was commenting on those living words of Col. 3:3: "You have died, and your life is hid with Christ in God." It is a matter of being locked up together, the scholar tells us, and that is our security.

The false securities constantly dog us. A psychologist friend of mine who is a devoted believer told me recently that it is estimated that 80% of the people have already sold their souls and bodies to "security" of some description, that only 20% stand up against the false values in an effort to be authentic, and it is only the 20%, who end up bloodied and battered by the struggle, that psychology has any hope of helping.

If we choose, we can hide in all sorts of "secure" places, whether a sect, an obsession, or an ego trip, and we can lose ourselves in the most fatal peril of all, self-deceit. The human race has long since learned that there is no real security in things, money, fame, position, or "marrying well." Not even in good health, social security, or the praise of our fellows. The Romans were wise men when they placed a soothsayer behind the conquering general as he rode in his chariot through the imperial city, who whispered in his ear amidst the adulation of the crowds, "All earthly glory is but for the moment."

Evil has its source in lies. Satan started it all with a lie. And the lies we tell ourselves may be the most damaging. But if evil has its source in lies, its only cure is truth. The church today suffers from the same failure that caused Jeremiah to censure the priests and prophets of his day, crying out: "They have healed the wound of my people lightly, saying 'Peace, peace,' when there is no peace" (Jer. 8:11). If we are declaring unto our people their sins, as God urged Isaiah to do, it is only *lightly.* The church today, like the world today, must hear the truth about itself. It is only when we face up to our sins that we can be healed through and through.

Security! It is surely Satan's craftiest deception. If all earthly glory is but for the moment, so are all the world's assurances. The painful truth is that there is no security in this world. That is what makes Col. 3:3 so comforting. *Your life is hid with Christ.* The *New English Bible* renders it: "Now your life lies hidden with Christ in God." That is the only way one can "hide" and find security — to be "locked up" with Jesus.

This does not mean, of course, that we have a kind of escape hatch and no longer have to deal with the world. It means that while we face up to the realities of our troubled world we have a peace and assurance that cannot be taken from us. In this verse, as always in the Christian faith, the end is fellowship with God. We are locked up with Christ *in God.* Jesus always points to the Father. He came to reveal the Father to us, and when we "die" to our sins and to the deceitfulness of this world he locks us up in the enfolding love of himself, which is *in God.*

Here we have the essence of unity in Christ, however diverse the elements. No two of us are likely to be as different as old Matthew Levi, a despised tax collector, and the stubborn zealot, Simon, whose greatest longing, at one time at least, would have been to put a knife in the back of a turncoat publican. Levi and Simon, a zealot and a publican, both chosen as disciples of Jesus! It confirms the authenticity of the Story. No one would have fabricated such an unlikely occurrence. Jesus took them both and molded them into the likeness of God. He "hid" them, locked them up, in himself and in the fellowship of God.

If Simon and Levi could be locked up together, why not all of us who are followers of Christ? When we are locked up together in Christ, we are also locked *in*, but never locked *out*, so that we know where we are and who we are. We are persuaded that if Christ carries the key no one will be locked up with us who should not be there. Thank God, preachers and editors do not carry the key! Since they can't lock anyone up, they can't lock anyone out.

Unlike so many oppressed people of the world who are locked up and locked in against their will, we are willing prisoners of the grace of God. We serve not by constraint but willingly. And it is the bond of love that joins all those who are united and locked up in Christ.

There is a crucial antecedent in the apostle's liberating declaration. It is only those who have *died* that have the hidden security with Jesus. "You have died . . ." he says to them. Do we think of our relationship to God in such terms? Dead?

It is one of those dynamic antonyms of Scripture. We become wise by becoming fools; we gain life by losing it; we are strong when we are weak, and we live only when, like the grain of wheat, we fall into the earth and die.

We die to sinful pride, to self-conceit, to all the confetti of this world, to carnality. We walk away from it all — counting it as refuse — so that' we might be locked up with Christ and all those who heed the call, "Come, follow me."

If we have died, then of course we are buried, and at last raised up. And that is where Paul begins his argument, with the grandest *If* ever: "If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, not on things that are on earth" (verse 1).

That is the meaning of Christian baptism. We are raised with Christ in baptism only because we have died with him. Then we are locked up. Robertson is right that there is our security, nowhere else. And there also is our unity — locked up together, locked in together, but never locked out. —*the Editor*

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WHAT DOES ROMANS 8:28 MEAN?

We know also that those who love God, those who have been called in terms of His purposes, have His aid and interest in everything. —Rom. 8:28 (Moffatt)

The King James Version of this passage may be the most serious mistranslation in the New Testament, one capable of doing much harm to Christian faith. Oftentimes differences in translation are of no great moment, but that is not the case with this passage.

When the KJV reads “All things work together for good to them that love God,” one may conclude that whatever happens to the believer, however oppressive life may become or however tragic the circumstance, God will turn it into good. Whether it be cancer, an epidemic, a tragic accident, or a broken marriage, we inappropriately apply the false hope that these things are somehow *good* to the one that loves God, for “All things work together for good.” This is of course folly, for there is no way to make *good* of a child coming down with leukemia or a man suffering a heart attack. Some things in this world are evil in nature and there is nothing good about them. The truth is that events often work together for evil, even to the most devoted believers. Life sometimes seems to conspire against us, with evils multiplying. There is no way to think of them as good.

I once visited a boy still in his teens, paralyzed from the neck down. He could do nothing for himself and was destined to live out his life in that condition. Could I tell him that if he loved the Lord what had happened to him was for his good? Is there anything good about hundreds of marines being blown to bits by a vicious bomb in Lebanon? How many of them loved the Lord?

In the above translation Moffatt rescues Rom. 8:28 from the injustice done to it by the KJV. Following the spirit of the Greek original, Moffatt turns the verse into a delightful, faith-building promise. We *do* have God’s help in everything that happens to us, however bad it is. What Rom. 8:28 promises us is that there is no situation in life, however desperate, that God will not be at work for our ultimate good, helping us and loving us.

If one sought to follow the original Greek of Rom. 8:28 it would be something like: *With those who love God, He (or God) co-operates in all respects for good.* Most modern versions correct the KJV in one way or another, such as the NIV: "We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him." More freely it could read: *Even in all the evil things that happen to us God causes good things to happen when we trust in him.*

I might say to the paralyzed lad that if he faces what has happened to him with Christ-like patience he might lead many others to a closer walk with God. His accident, which occurred amidst teenage foolishness, might make a difference in his own salvation, if he responds to the tragedy in the right way. How might his life had gone without the accident?

Such things we might think or say, but we must rise above the myth of the modern mind that the universe behaves benignly for us earthlings who dare to cope with it, and that for "good folk" it will all work out OK. It often does *not* work out OK, even for the best of folk, and the universe is always playing dirty tricks on us. For many, many people in this world (the majority?) things will not work out for their wellbeing. They are doomed to ignorance, poverty, starvation, deprivation, homelessness, crime, violence, war, prostitution, meaninglessness, desperation, oppression. It is that kind of world. And many of those who suffer the most are believers.

As I write these words there comes to mind a teenage girl that I met in a tribal village in northern Thailand, where a few illiterate Christians live among Animists. The girl, caught up in deep poverty, is doomed (or so it seems) to live on with almost no opportunity to improve her station in life. A lovely girl, she must spend her days in the rice field and her nights in a bamboo hut with its dirt floor, helping her parents eke out a living. How can I tell her, how can I believe, that a better life awaits her after awhile— or for scores of children in her village who get not even one day of schooling a year? Christian missions try to reach out to these people, but it is so little and seems so futile. How do we relate the promises of God to these blighted people who profess to believe?

I heard a Methodist minister tell how he ministered to people in tragic circumstances. He told of this man whose little boy was suddenly snatched from him in an accident. The minister went to his home at the appropriate time and simply sat with him. He quietly said to the grieved father, "Henry, I don't see how you can stand it. I don't think I could take

it." That is all he tried to say. He did not try to minimize the loss by assuring him that somehow it was good. When the father saw that the minister understood the dimension of his grief, he could open up and talk (and weep) about it.

We can do no better than our Lord did, who was realistic about this world we live in. *In the world you will have troubles,* Jesus assured his disciples. But still he could say, *Be of good cheer, for I have overcome the world* (Jn. 16:33). We too can overcome it through his graciousness, however tragic life may be. The promise goes well with the great truth of Rom. 8:28. *—the Editor, from Chiang mai, Thailand.*

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WHY SHOULD WE DENOMINATE OURSELVES?

Cecil Hook

When the Lord adds the saved to his church, he does not make them parts of a sect or denomination. They are the church. As there is only one church, it needs no name. God gave it none. He did not denominate it. To name is to denominate; to denominate is to name. A denomination is a class or kind having a specific name. To give the church a name is to give it a denominational trait.

A proper name designates a specific person, place, or thing like John Doe; Rochester, Texas; or Congress. Proper names should be capitalized. "Man" is a common or class name distinguishing us from animals, trees, cars, and metals. Generally we can be designated as persons, individuals, inhabitants, and homo sapiens. We may be described as intelligent, moral, passionate, and inventive. None of these designations or descriptions are the proper name of man either individually or collectively.

In like manner the term "church" distinguishes the saved from lodges, banks, corporations, and labor unions. Other designations, such as body, kingdom, and family, reveal its nature. None of these, however, is a proper name for the saved people.

Names are given to identify. A person wishes to be distinguished from all other persons. So he accepts a specific, or proper, name. His name may be Hook. There are other Hooks. So he accepts a full proper name of Solomon Slaughter Hook. That distinguishes him from everybody else! (That was my father's name.)

The church, being one, needs no proper name to identify it as being different. Sects and divisions may want to identify themselves because of their lack of identity with the one church. So they name (denominate) themselves. When we denominate ourselves, how can we convince others that we are not really a denomination?

If the Lord had intended that the body of believers have a proper name, surely He would have told us about it. But He didn't. The claim that church of God, church of the living God, church of the first-born, church of Christ, and church of the saints are all proper names is unfounded and confusing.

Some seek to solve the name problem by referring to the body as the church of Christ with a little "c". It is true that the word "church" is not capitalized in Scriptural usage; however, it is not used as a proper noun in the Scriptures. Putting "church of Christ" on the sign, letterhead, and bulletin violates basic grammar. "church of Christ" is being used as a proper name, and proper names must be capitalized.

An acceptance of the name "Church of Christ" has been nurtured which is sectarian in spirit. The name has come to have a true ring to it. We hear about Church of Christ preachers, Church of Christ literature, Church of Christ colleges, and Church of Christ weddings. In publications we read of congregations being specified as Northside Church of Christ, Eastside Church of Christ, and Westside Church of Christ. Isn't it sufficient to use Northside church, or, if that is the full and accepted name of the group, Northside Church? Individual congregations may be designated rightly by location without any sectarian name.

Evidently Paul was in the church of God at Corinth when he wrote: "the churches of Christ salute you." In sending greetings from the church of God at Corinth, was he sending greetings from a church of Christ or from a Church of Christ?

Techniques of scholasticism have been employed to support loyalty to the name "Church of Christ." These devised arguments maintain that (1) the church belongs to Christ; hence it should wear his name, and (2) the church is the bride of Christ, and a bride always honors the husband by wearing his name.

The church does belong to Christ, but which inspired writer used that as an argument for a proper name? How far does that rule apply? My dog belongs to me, but it does not wear my name. The church belongs to God also. How does the rule apply here? Which of our buildings has "Church of God" on it?

If the church wears the Savior's name, it will be called the "Church of Jesus" because His name was Jesus, not Christ.

My bride honored me by wearing my name, but we have no record in the Bible of any wife wearing her husband's name. We have taken a modern Western custom and tried to make a Biblical pattern out of it. Wives still do not wear their husbands' names in some countries and cultures today.

To argue that the bride should wear the name of the groom is to admit that the church should have a proper name to denominate it.

My wife wears my name, but she did not do so until after our marriage. Jesus and His bride are engaged, but not married. His bride has not been presented to him yet (Ephesians 5:25-28). We have been invited to their wedding (Revelation 19:7-9; 21:2).

If the body of the saved is to have a proper title, we are still faced with a problem. The Greek word from which "church" is derived is not even used in the New Testament in relation to God's people! When you look up the word "church" in *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* by Vine, you will be instructed to see "assembly" and "congregation". There is no listing under the word "church".

The Greek word "ecclesia" has been translated into the English word "church", but that is not its meaning. The word "church" is derived from the Greek word "kuriakos". You may learn that from your English dictionary. That word is used only in 1 Corinthians 11:20 and Revelation 1:10, and it means: belonging to the Lord; pertaining to the Lord. How could a word which has no counterpart in the New Testament be a part of an authorized title for God's people?

The Greek word "ecclesia", in pre-Christian use, designated a regular assembly of the whole body of citizens in a free city-state called out by the heralds for the discussion and decision of public business. Jesus took this common word to describe those whom He would save. The emphasis is not on what or where they were called out from, but in being called into an assembly. The closest single-word translation into English would be assembly or congregation.

Assemblies designated by location may be parts of the general assembly and church of the first-born ones. We have ample Scriptural precedent for designating congregations by location. They had no problem about identity in the first century. We have a denominational problem today. Why add to the problem by denominating ourselves? Let those who wish to be distinguished from the universal church take distinctive names. But if we are a part of the universal church, why should we want to be distinguished from it?

Time honored names are not changed readily. It is hard for us to admit a need for change. It is painful to change from that to which we have become accustomed. Reform never comes easily. It has never been the easiest course to speak where the Bible speaks and to call Bible things by Bible names. —*1350 Huisache, New Braunfels, Texas 78130*

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WAS THE OLD LAW NAILED TO THE CROSS?

It has long been considered part of the "sound doctrine" among Churches of Christ that the old Mosaic law was nailed to the Cross, thus abrogating it or ending it. A clear, succinct statement of this appears in *What* is *the Church of Christ?,* a pamphlet by Joe R. Barnett, who can speak for Churches of Christ as well as anyone: "The New Testament teaches that the Old Law was 'blotted out,' taken out of the way, and nailed to the cross (Col. 2:14)."

If the New Testament teaches this, we have a problem of conflict of some proportion, for Jesus was adamant that "I have not come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfil them." If he abolished or abrogated the law at the Cross, he did what he did not come to do. He was emphatic that the law would endure until the consummation of all things: "Truly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law until all is accomplished" (Mt. 5:18). Since the law calls for the rule of love upon earth and peace among nations we can hardly say that "all is accomplished." Therefore, the law stands, every dot and iota.

The apostle Paul had the same lofty view of the law that our Lord had, even going so far as to say: "Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the law" (Ro. 3:31). It hardly figures that the apostle would continue to "uphold" what had years since been abolished, and certainly he would not refer to it as

"holy, just and good" as he does in Ro. 7:12. In fact, in that same chapter he explains that it was the law that brought him to a knowledge of sin (verse 7). It is clear that Paul upheld what some of us would overthrow.

Does Col. 2:14, quoted by brother Barnett as proof that the law was nailed to the Cross, teach that the law came to an end? It reads, including the preceding verse: "And you, who were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, having canceled the bond which stood against us with its legal demands; this he set aside, nailing it to the cross."

Does it say the law was nailed to the Cross? It was rather "the bond which stood against us with its legal demands" that was set aside and nailed to the Cross. Right? On what basis do we identify "the damning evidence of broken laws and commandments which always hung over our heads," as Phillips renders it, with the law itself? It is the *curse* of the law or the *debt* it places upon us that is blotted out. Christ paid the debt (of the law) *for me* when he died on the Cross. My sins, which I was guilty of because of the law, were nailed to the cross along with the Lord. As Gal. 3:13 has it: "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law," not the law itself.

If I owe the city of Denton a huge debt in back taxes, so huge that there is no way for me to meet the obligation, I am in danger of losing my property. A friend out of mercy redeems the debt for me, and I can now keep my property. The "bond written in ordinances, " the bill from the tax collector, which declared my indebtedness, can now be torn up, or it can be nailed to the bulletin board at the city hall and marked paid. What has been blotted out? My debt, not the law of taxation itself.

In like manner, Jesus did not blot out the law, but the "damning evidence" of the law. He died "in order that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us," as per Rom. 8:4. By keeping the law perfectly and by not sinning because of it, Jesus fulfilled the law, which is what he came to do. Those of us who accept him as Lord and Savior through faith are thus free of the law's condemnation, for we too have now fulfilled the law's demands and stand in a right relation (righteous) before God. Jesus fulfilled the law's demands and imputed that to us. That is what happened on the Cross, a *free gift* from the Father. But nothing happened to the law *per se.*

The law is basically the decalogue, the Ten Commandments, which, according to Moses, "God wrote them upon two tables of stone, and gave them to me." Yet Jesus said it was "the law and the prophets" that would not pass away. This is because the prophets

were interpreters of the law, and their writings are expansions and explanations of the law. When Micah wrote: “What does the Lord require of you, but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?,” he was saying what the Lord had already implied in the decalogue. Jesus summarized the law even more when he gave what we call “the Golden Rule,” explaining that “this is the law and the prophets.” Paul was equally succinct in his summary of what the law is all about, reducing it to what he called “one word”: “The whole law is fulfilled in one word, ‘Y ou shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Gal. 5:14).

None of us would dare say that we are not amenable to the Golden Rule or to “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,” and yet we disassociate ourselves from the law. Jesus and Paul say they are the same. All the world, every creature on earth, is responsible to the law. It is in fact the law that shows us how sinful we are.

The Son of God did not come to this world to take away one law and give us another. He did neither. He fulfilled the old law by living according to its demands *perfectly.* Satan, the great accuser, had no charge to bring against the Messiah in that he was sinless. Jesus became our “sin bearer” because he had no sins of his own to bear. We are all found sinners in the light of the law, and we can all say with Paul: “the very commandment which promised life proved to be death to me” (Ro. 7:10). Why? Because we can’t keep the law, just as Paul could not. As the apostle put it, *faith had to enter in.* Law-keeping never puts one right with God, however lofty that law is, for man is *lawless* by nature (or practice).

That is why Jesus did not give us another law. If “the law of the Lord is perfect,” as the psalmist insists, then it cannot be improved upon. Jesus did not bring a more perfect law. He brought no law at all. He came to teach, to enhance, to fulfil, to give meaning to the eternal law of God. It was the only time in history that a representative of the human race fulfilled all the demands and purposes of the law, which were to make one right with God. He was thus the proper agent for the unfolding of a new era for God’s children, as he himself put it: “The law and the prophets were until John; since then the good news of the kingdom of God is preached, and everyone enters it violently” (Lk. 16:16). While Jesus did not bring a new law, he brought the kingdom of God. He *was* the kingdom in its essence. And all of this was anticipated in the law and the prophets.

There is no reason to believe that a law Jesus might give would be superior to the one God had already given to Moses and the prophets. We could not keep a “Christian law” any more than we can keep the law God gave at Mt. Sinai. We cannot be made right before

God by *any* law. A law coming from Jesus would be as much "death" to us, to use Paul's language, as the law of Moses is, for it too would be "damning evidence" against us. If Jesus could have saved us by giving us a better law, he would not have had to go to the Cross. The apostle said it well: "If justification were through the law, then Christ died to no purpose" (Gal. 2:21).

It is true that the Scriptures say such things as "You are not under law but under grace" (Ro. 6:14) and even "Christ is the end of the law" (Ro. 10:4). These cannot mean that we are no longer responsible to God's eternal law, but that we are not under law *for justification.* Christ did not end the law, but the ordeal of trying to be saved by it. Then there is the entire theme of Hebrews, which is that a new covenant has made the first obsolete — "And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away" (Heb. 8:13). But it is not God's law that becomes obsolete, but rather the covenant that he made with Israel. While we have a new covenant (agreement) in Christ, we do not have a new law. The reference to "the law of Christ" in Gal. 6:2 alludes to the law of love or the Golden Rule, not to a system of law.

I am to love the law that God has given, like the psalmist did, in esteeming the law above silver and gold. It disciplines and educates me; it reminds me of my vulnerabilities and my need of God's grace. I am to search out the will of God in Moses, Isaiah, and Hosea as well as Luke, Paul and Peter. It all "applies" to me. There are ceremonial injunctions growing out of the law in both Testaments that are restricted to time and circumstance, but we are always to honor God for the law he has given and we are to obey that law as best we can, even if Jesus has already obeyed it for us.

I strive to obey the law, such as the Golden Rule, which, as we have seen, is the essence of the law, not to be saved, but because I am saved, and because I love God. I want to please and honor him, so I obey his law, even if imperfectly. But by the power of the Holy Spirit I am able to obey the law more and more, and I know that it is good for me, that I will be abundantly blessed in both body and spirit, to keep God's law.

It is a chilling disregard for God's law that is leading to the destruction of the human race. People live as if God had never spoken to the prophets of old. *Thou shalt have no gods beside me!, Thou shalt make no graven image!, Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain!* are injunctions from the God of heaven that sit in judgment on our irreverent idolatrous world. *Thou shalt not murder!, Thou shalt not commit adultery!, Thou shalt not steal!* are eternal laws of a loving God who knows what is best for his children. Most of the world lives as if such laws had never been written by God's own hand. Even

on TV before our children these laws are scorned and mocked. To have “an affair” is smart, and an abortion (six million a year in the U.S. alone!) is one more way to make life convenient. The drunkard is a fun guy on the TV screen. And even though “sodomites” are listed among those who disobey God’s law (1 Tim. 1:10), we are constantly pressured to accept sodomy as honorable behavior, with such euphemisms as “alternate life style.” The Ten Commandments have no alternatives!

Some of my brethren resist being “under” the Ten Commandments because of the fourth commandment, the Sabbath law. They will even say, “We are under nine of them, for they are included in the New Testament.” God’s commandments are not holy and good because of where they appear, Old or New Testament, but because they came from him. It seems that he even made them a part of man’s conscience, and they existed before they were written. As for the Sabbath rest that God enjoined, it was realized for Israel on the seventh day. As with all the law that is gloriously enhanced in the person of Christ, Jesus becomes “the sabbath rest” for Christians.

We should praise God for the role of law, for as Paul put it: “Law came in, to increase the trespass; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more” (Rom. 5:20). So that is what we are saying: rather than nailing it to the Cross, *let law in* so that we can see the full measure of our sin. Then grace abounds all the more. If we neglect the law, grace may not abound. —*the Editor*

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OUR CHANGING WORLD

J. C. Reed, longtime missionary to Guatemala, reports that he and his wife Mim delivered a baby one night in a home in Santa Elena. J. C., whose son Ralph serves as a Wycliffe translator in Mexico, runs a ranch and does radio evangelism in Flores, Peten as part of his diverse ministry to the Guatemalans, which sometimes includes being a lay doctor.

About twenty Church of Christ families have settled in at the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Chattanooga in recent years. This took place gradually and from more than one Church of Christ, and the response from one of these, an old-line preacher family, indicates that all is well: “Such happiness and enthusiasm you’ve never seen, or at least we have not!”

Jerry Jones, who has become even more famous recently by being fired by Harding University, was at the unity conference conducted last month by the University Church of Christ in Conway, Arkansas. Jerry told those gathered from all three churches of our Movement that many in Churches of Christ would leave if they had to, even if it meant a sacrifice of doctrine, and go where they can hear Christ preached. He said he based this upon extensive contact with our churches in recent months.

At that same conference, which we hope to say more about in our next issue, Alan Hicks told of a Church of Christ in Nashville, where Rubel Shelley ministers, that became so repentant of its sectarian past that they went out into their neighborhood door-to-door and apologized for being sectarian through the years. Don't you know that blew people's minds: Church of Christ folk in Nashville knocking at their door and apologizing for being sectarians! Who can say our world isn't changing?

I have letters from two participants of last fall's lectureship conducted here in Denton by the Pearl St. Church of Christ, one of which explains why he did not appear on the program after being scheduled, while the other indicates that it might have been better had he not appeared. When the first one was told that he could use only certain versions of the Bible, he opted not to appear personally. But his manuscript was read in his absence, with the statement made, so he was told, that he could not substantiate his position no matter what version he used! The other brother supposed he was to be part of an objective study of prophecy, but found himself in an atmosphere of debate. He at last filed this complaint with the brother who turned out to be his antagonist: *you are more interested in refuting my position than in understanding it.* We have all been guilty of that, and this may be the root of many of our problems. And sometimes we do not understand another's position because we don't want to understand it. That is hardly being teachable, which is essential to being truly Christian. As for the Pearl St. church, where I have sat many, many hours listening (with appreciation) to others, I will be pleased to set forth my position on unity and fellowship at one of their lectureships *and use only the King James Version*, which I dearly love, though I agree with the brother referred to above that we should not pontificate about versions. Perhaps we should not pontificate at all!

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READERS' EXCHANGE

If homosexual tendencies are natural in some people and not learned, as you and others in your paper have implied, we still cannot conclude that God does not condemn homosexual practices, for due to man's fall there are many things, such as lying and cheating, that are "natural." We are not to be surprised that in one's youth there are these "natural" tendencies, including an inordinate attraction toward those of one's own sex. God has made it clear in his word that homosexual acts are sinful (Rom. 1:26, 27 to name one passage). This makes it clear that what seems "natural" to us is to be rejected. —*James D. Flanagin, Brownwood, Tx.*

Our congregation is small and informal, and an article in your paper is often the springboard for discussion on Sunday morning. There is so much to be studied that has nothing to do with church politics or denominational argument. I have neither the energy nor the interest for the latter. It seems that the church has existed for the sole purpose of arguing about something. In these parts we date everything from some minor skirmish or major battle. While we were right in the middle of these wars, we are now older and we are tired of them. Maybe we can't stop the war, but we can certainly refuse to participate. We find churches outside our brotherhood to be much different, full of *people.* We are seeking a way to be a group without the warfare. —*Lonnie Guinn, 244 EI Campo Dr.. S. San Francisco, Ca. 94080.*

Since I did not have a copy of your history, I borrowed one from Joe Jones. I have read it and re-read a number of portions. I certainly want a copy for my own library. I could keep Joe's but I remember a Biblical commandment against that type of action and attitude. It would be difficult for you to know how much you have helped me prepare for my class in Restoration History. —*Henry McAdams, St. Louis Church of Christ, St. Louis, Michigan.*

I enjoyed reading *The Stone-Campbell Movement* very much indeed. Most of the material was a revelation to me as I knew little of the history of the Movement in America. Shame on me! Chapter 2 on European influences is of course of special interest to me, being a Scotsman. It proved most useful in a study I made this year on the history of the British churches. —*Ian S. Davidson, Glasgow, Scotland.*

Re: your article on printing, I have used the expression "the miracle of the printing press" on many occasion. As with many other things, we take the availability of mass-printed materials, especially the Scriptures, for granted. Thank you for reminding us that the Scriptures have not always been as available. —*Jerry Taylor, College Park, GA.*

I do not understand what happened to the Dallas Cowboys this year. —*Max Foster, Arkansas City, KS.*

(Those of us in the Dallas area know what happened since we are near the action and have inside information. They got beat! It is too bad that all life's mysteries are not so easily solved. —*Ed.*)

It is ironic that you are stuck with the title Restoration Review in light of your insistence that our movement is more reformation than restoration. I'm not fussing, just observing. —*Gene Jarrett, Morrow, GA.*

(While I am persuaded that the term restoration has little value in the vocabulary of the modern church, I go along with some of the recent efforts to re-define it, such as renewal or renewal through recovery, and in that sense I can use the term with good conscience. It is the doctrine of restorationism, which falsifies the true nature of the church, that I particularly object to. —*Ed.*)

BOOK NOTES

Those who collect books on our heritage will want a copy of a popular reprint, Thomas W. Phillips' *The Church of Christ.* For many years it was published anonymously, by simply "A layman." The reprint is only 5.50 postpaid.

A longtime favorite of our readers is *A Short History of the Early Church,* which is an excellent overview of the church from its beginning to the time of Augustine, which tells about the persecutions, the heretics, the great fathers, and the great councils. 5.50 postpaid.

College Press has issued new titles that should interest our readers. *What the Bible Says About the Great Tribulation* by William R. Kimball, and *What the Bible Says About God the Creator* by Jack Cottrell. These are books that teach you the Scriptures, highly resourceful. 13.50 each, postpaid.

If you will send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to Buff Scot!, Jr., 1003 Pilot Ave., Cherokee, IO 51012, he will send you a free copy of an exchange he had as to whether the "Church of Christ" is counterfeit with a minister of that church.

If you have a need to read some devotional material, we suggest *The Practice of the Presence of God* by Brother Lawrence Also Jon Tal Murphree's *A Loving God and a Suffering World,* which deals with the age-old question "Why me, God?" Each book is 4.50 postpaid.

In Search of God's Ideal Woman by Dorothy Pape is an excellent study on the ministry and role of the Christian woman, which has a chapter on the single or divorced woman. 6.95 postpaid.

If you have not yet read C. S. Lewis, we would urge this upon you. An excellent start would be our "five-pac" offer of five of his most widely read books in handsome paperbacks for 15.00 postpaid. These are: *Mere Christianity, Miracles, Problem of Pain, The Great Divorce, Screwtape Letters.*

We have four bound volumes of this journal: *Principles of Unity and Fellowship* (1977); *The Ancient Order* (1978); *Blessed Are the Peacemakers/With All the Mind* (double volume, 1979-80); *Jesus Today* (double volume, 1981-82). The single volumes are 5.50 each, the double volumes 8.50 each postpaid when paid in advance. These are handsomely bound with dust jackets, ideal as library copies.

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We are now well into our second printing of *The Stone-Campbell Movement* with upwards of 4,000 copies already sold, which shows folk will read history if it is interesting. We believe you will find it interesting. Rather than borrow a copy, as so many do, why not buy your own copy to mark and keep. If 21.95 sounds high, you are to realize that it is over 700 pages in hardcover. If you send a check with your order, we'll pay the postage, which helps some.

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